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**Western & Southern
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R. NADAL/J. Benneteau

5-7, 7-6, 6-2

An interview with:

JULIEN BENNETEAU

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Is the ice from an injury today, or is this normal after a match?

JULIEN BENNETEAU: No, it's normal after a match since five, six months. It's a little bit sore, so I need to put some ice after my practice and my match.

Q. Even though you lost today, you showed people how to defeat Nadal. What kind of things do you think you did correctly in first two sets?

JULIEN BENNETEAU: I return pretty well. This was my plan, to put him some pressure on his serve, and especially on his second serve. Because Nadal, after he serve, he take the advantage with his forehand. When he's doing that, it's almost impossible win the point.

So at the beginning, I returned very well on his first serve or so, and very aggressive. After, maybe he was a little bit surprise of that. After that, he change, he mixed a little bit his zone on the serve.

After his first serve mostly of the points, he could take the point with his forehand and beginning to move me on the court and to put the ball, right, left, right, left. This is the way with a guy very strong.

After that, I had to be very aggressive also on my serve to mix a little bit, and then when I had opportunity to go to the net, but in the good condition. Because against him, if you go to the

net with a poor shot, he has such a good passing shot.

So you have to be patient, to wait the right ball; and when you have the right ball, to hit it very correctly to have the volley to play. But this is what I did, and it was almost good. (Smiling.)

Q. Also talk about match point. You could have won in two sets.

JULIEN BENNETEAU: Yeah, but on the tiebreak, in the tiebreak and on the match point, and even the point after at 6-All, I had nothing to do, nothing to say. Yes, I have to say one thing: Well done. Because he played like No. 1 in the world. Two first serve, two winners with his forehand, and I did not have an opportunity in the point, in the rally, to put him some pressure.

So I have no regrets on these points. If I have one regret, it's at the beginning of the second set I have a very bad game on my first game on my serve. And then at 3-2 for me, I was 2-0 down and I broke back and I come back, and then I broke him.

Then it's another bad game from me at 3-2 also. My first serve percentage dropped. I made some double faults. My serve was not so good, and I missed one or two shots. Against him, when have the opportunity to win, you must make this shot. This is just regrets I have.

After, on the match point, I had nothing to say. First serve, I return well, and then I had two, three shots. But with forehand, I try to find some -- to play deep, but it was -- his forehand is too heavy and to strong. Sometimes you cannot do what you want.

Q. Late in the first set, you found yourself at 15-40, and also very late in the second set. Can you share a little bit about what you were looking to do on those points to win against him?

JULIEN BENNETEAU: Yeah, I tried to put my first serve, but a strong one in and not to wait that he can make a mistake or he can give me the point. To hit the ball strong and to be very close to

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my baseline. To be able to take the one opportunity, if there is a short one, and I can go to the net. This is mostly what I have in my mind during the whole game, and I try to do this all the way, all the match.

But against him, you have to be very quick with your legs, because his ball is more heavy than anyone. You have to do some shots that you don't need to do against the other players.

So at the end, it's difficult, because nervously and physically, it's hard to keep this level. That's why he's No. 1; that's why he won today also. Against another player, I think I could have won the game.

Q. You are in your best personal ranking in both singles and doubles. How could you be your best self in relatively late age?

JULIEN BENNETEAU: You think I'm old?

Q. No, no.

JULIEN BENNETEAU: For me, I keep -- yes, I have my best ranking both in singles and doubles, and I'm 28. Even when I was younger I was mature on the court a little bit later than the other one. When I was in juniors or under-16 or under-14, it was like this.

I think I have some more years in front of me to be better than I am today. I have more experience; I feel stronger in every part of my game. And with a match like this, with the Federer match in November when I beat him, it gives me more confidence also.

I need to be stronger in this way to be higher in the ranking. And I think with the years, with the experience, and with a lot of matches like this, it's gonna help me for the future. I hope so.

But I really think that the best years are in front of me. And to play doubles also helped me to stay and to improve my game. That's the word I was searching for. I improve every year my game. I try to play more consistently and to be better in every part of my game. The doubles helped me a lot for that.

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